Around the Nation

Sirhan Verdict Upheld in Calif.

LOS ANGELES—The California Supreme Court yesterday upheld the first-degree murder conviction of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan in the 1968 assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy but modified his sentence to life imprisonment.

The modification of sentence complied with the court's ruling earlier this year which abolished capital punishment in California.

Attorneys for Sirhan, 28, an Arab immigrant, asked for a new trial on grounds that an illegal search led to his conviction and sentencing. Sirhan originally was sentenced to death in the gas chamber.

The state court's decision denying a new trial was unanimous.

Kennedy was shot June 5, 1968, just after winning California's Democratic presidential primary.

The court issued a 75-page opinion rejecting all appeals which have been filed by Sirhan's attorneys since conviction and imprisonment on death row in 1969.

Panther Sentenced

NEW YORK—A 17-year-old Black Panther convicted of killing a fellow Panther in an East Coast-West Coast party feud was sentenced to 15 years to life yesterday—just two days after the trial of four other Panthers charged in the case ended in a hung jury.

Mark Holder, convicted last April 14 of murder and second-degree arson in the death of Samuel Napier, was sentenced in Queens Supreme Court by Justice Bernard Dubin.

Holder was one of seven East Coast Panthers indicted in the murder of West Coast Panther Napier, whose bullet-riddled body was discovered April 17, 1971, by firemen responding to a blaze at a Queens building used as a distribution center for the West Coast party newspaper.